The Progressive Review

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Third party time

It is a sign of the growing enthusiasm for a new politics that at one point last summer three national conferences on the subject were planned for the same fall weekend. It is also a sign of how difficult it may be to bring together the forces seeking such a new politics. Still, there are undeniably crocuses sprouting in the front yard of progressive America. There is a sense of things beginning, the thrill of commencement, a feeling that the status quo is too unstable, untenable, and ultimately anti-human to rest secure for long.

Three decades ago, America was run by laws that denied rights and services to citizens because of their race. Now America is increasingly being run by laws that would deny rights and services to nearly everyone. Three decades ago, majority Americans were shocked by Bull Connor's dogs on TV; today even Robert Novak complains in print of his treatment by police. Three decades ago, both the incomes of Americans and the jobs to provide them were increasing; today this is no longer true.

The only things that can maintain such conditions are lies and force. There are, of course, plenty of both. Politics has become a phantasmagoria of distorted reality, ideas appearing to be where in truth there are none, crises mysteriously emerging and dissolving in the dimness, facts changing their shape with the swing of the magic lantern, all performed with certainty that the media will not reveal the illusions' secrets. And where propaganda does not work, we have 100,000 more cops, a counter-terrorism bill, a curfew here, forfeiture without trial there, the paramilitary occupation of deep urban America, the repeated assurance from the White House down that all of this is done on our behalf and the mayor of New York saying, "Freedom is about the willingness of every single human being to cede to lawful authority a great deal of discretion about what you do."

Now, though, even the elites are worried that force and lies will not be enough. For the first time in more than a lifetime, media and establishment icons are publicly willing to consider jettisoning the two party system entirely, replacing it with some "centrist" fabrication that will mystically squeeze into the thin slot between rightist Democrats and rightist Republicans.

In truth, what these establishment leaders want isn't really a new party at all, but merely a temporary fan club to sweep their agent into office next November. Ironically, they find themselves engaged in such considerations precisely because, at about this same time four years ago, they were similarly attempting to decide which candidate would be best for the American public. They settled upon William Jefferson Clinton.

After such misplaced and counterproductive interference in the normal processes of democracy, one might hope for some reticence or humility or even, in the best of times, an abject apology. Instead, some of the same people who gave us Clinton are at it again.

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Editor: Sam Smith
The Progressive Review
1739 Connecticut Ave NW
Washington DC 20009
202-232-5544
Fax Nbr: 202-234-6222

Internet: ssmith @ igc. org
Compuserve: 72067,1525
Prodigy: SFGW68A
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Their most frequently mentioned candidate is Colin Powell, a man who has built a career on clichés, caution, conventionality, and saying yes to the right people. Like Clinton four years ago, he has the singular advantage of being an enigma. Because he has no political record he is immune from attack. Powell is a sort of black Eliot Richardson, the man with the golden curriculum vitae. Like Richardson, his accomplishments consist of a long series of titles, and like Richardson, few can remember what he did while holding them. Richardson's finest hour was when he resigned from the government; Powell's finest hour, they say, was pursing a war that he initially opposed, then pursued with capricious brutality, and finally never quite got around to finishing. In fact, many of Powell's veterans, thanks the Gulf War syndrome (just one of the grotesque results of this misadventure), are in a lot worse shape than the supposed target, Saddam Hussein.

Powell has spent most of his life as a military organization man, rising through his mastery of the mundane. Where he has had to face some major choices, he has little to show for it. In Iran-Contra, the prosecutors concluded, for example, that Powell made "inconsistent" and "misleading" statements, although not enough to warrant prosecution. He was in charge of a war marked by unprecedented secrecy and by excessive civilian casualties. We don't know the scope of the latter for sure because of the extent of the former. We do know that Powell's Pentagon misled the public on a number of points, including the accuracy of Stealth fighters and Patriot missiles. It is fair to say, from the record of the Gulf and Iran-Contra, that Powell is not to be trusted.

None of this seems to be of much interest to an obscenely obsequious media. The liberal Robert Kuttner even suggested that Powell "would co-opt a great deal of the dangerous anti-system feeling in the country that might otherwise go to real kooks. As a military man, he's the one candidate with the credentials and the nerve to face down the militias and the armed right." Presumably Kuttner wasn't thinking of Powell's troops barbecuing large numbers of Iraqi soldiers on the retreat to Baghdad, but one never knows for sure any more.

There has also been, of course, the slight matter of what Powell believes, but we are assured that if we just hang in there, we really will find out. At last reports, he was morphing into a moderate Republican. The clues, however, are not encouraging. For example, in an interview with Henry Louis Gates, Powell offered this solution to the problems of the inner cities:

> Once these kids come out of school, there has got to be a capitalistic entrepreneurial system that is just burning up the place to create the jobs for these kids. And therefore you've got to get the tax burden off business. You've got to lower the capital gains tax.

If reason mattered, such a discussion of the complexities of urban America would be considered puerile and infantile. But no worse, I suppose, than Our General's Maxims, of which number eleven is: "Have a

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vision." As the *New York Times*' Maureen Dowd asked recently, "Are we craving the sort of leader who needs to write himself a note to 'have a vision'? . . . Do we really want a president who talks like a Nike ad, an embroidered pillow?"

Who knows anymore? It seems, however, the overclass thinks so. And there are signs of big money moving quietly behind the big tent, with Wall Street and Hollywood figures such as Felix Rohatyn, Steve Rattner, Barry Diller and Michael Eisner reported working for a Powell or Bradley type of candidacy. Apparently, they imagine a sort of Disney Prez. Hell, they bought ABC, why not the White House, too?

Meanwhile, in the face of such disingenuous and dangerous impersonations of political change, more and more Americans are seeking the real thing, an honest transformation towards a decent and democratic politics in which individuals and communities matter. A group of us in the Green Politics Network tested the possibilities of such a politics at an unusual national conference held last June. The Third Parties '96 conference, coordinated by Linda Martin, brought together over a hundred activists and leaders from a broad range of political groups. The conference was run on the notion that we should discuss what we had in common, not what divided us. There were greens, marxists, former Perot backers and conservative libertarians. The mood was gentle, the technique was consensus and the outcome generally encouraging. At one point several of the libertarian attendees even offered to leave so that consensus could be maintained; instead it was agreed to simply to accept different levels of consensus. More than a dozen points found full agreement, including issues of democratic process and the reduction of the military. The results were pleasing enough that another gathering, perhaps to plan a third party presidential bid, is planned for January.

The third parties' conference was only the first of several during the summer months. A conference spearheaded by Ron Daniels' National People's Progressive Network couldn't agree on a third party bid as a number of delegates opposed a break with the Democrats. There was support, however, for emphasizing local elections, with or without a national run.

There are clearly considerable opportunities at the local level. As *Ballot Access News* has pointed out, for example, there were 6,100 state legislative seats up for grabs in 1994. In 2200 of them, one of the major parties did not field a candidate. At present, only three of the seats are held by members of third parties. To those progressives favoring strong decentralization of government, it makes sense to take the battle to the communities they wish to empower.

The summer was further enlivened by a national Green Party conference in New Mexico and a compelling

Over the past year, I have been a participant and partisan in various discussions concerning progressive politics in 1996. I remain among those unconvinced that a presidential bid is the best use of a progressive's time next year. Instead, I have suggested an approach along these lines:

- The creation of a multi-party alliance similar to that formed in New Zealand.
- Emphasis on local and state races such as the large number of unchallenged state legislative seats. High profile races (such as for governor or senator) should be teamed with a less important contest (such as secretary of state or treasurer) so that those sympathetic to a third party have a way of expressing it if they can't bring themselves to vote third party in the main contest.
- Ballot access and proportional representation should be high priority issues. Without progress in these areas, third party efforts will not get far.
- A progressive shadow government should be formed.
- Progressive should cooperate with the Libertarians on such issues as the drug wars and election reform.
- The creation of a populist movement along the lines suggested by Ronnie Dugger.
- The creation of a culture -- as well as a politics -- of decency and transformation. This should not be a counter-culture but rather a new mainstream culture, spurring a social paradigm shift such as occurred before the American revolution or with the contemporary environmental movement.

- Those seeking a more presidential approach to 1996 politics, should contact *Linda Martin: Lindamartin@igc.org:* Linda Martin was the coordinator of the Third Parties '96 Conference and is a member of the Green Politics Network.
- For more on the proposed citizen alliance, contact: *Ronnie Dugger, Citizens Alliance: Rdugger123@aol.com*
- To follow ballot access issues, *Ballot Accress News* is essential: *Ballot Access News: ban@ igc.org*
- For more on the New Party. Contact: *newparty@igc.org*

-- S.S.

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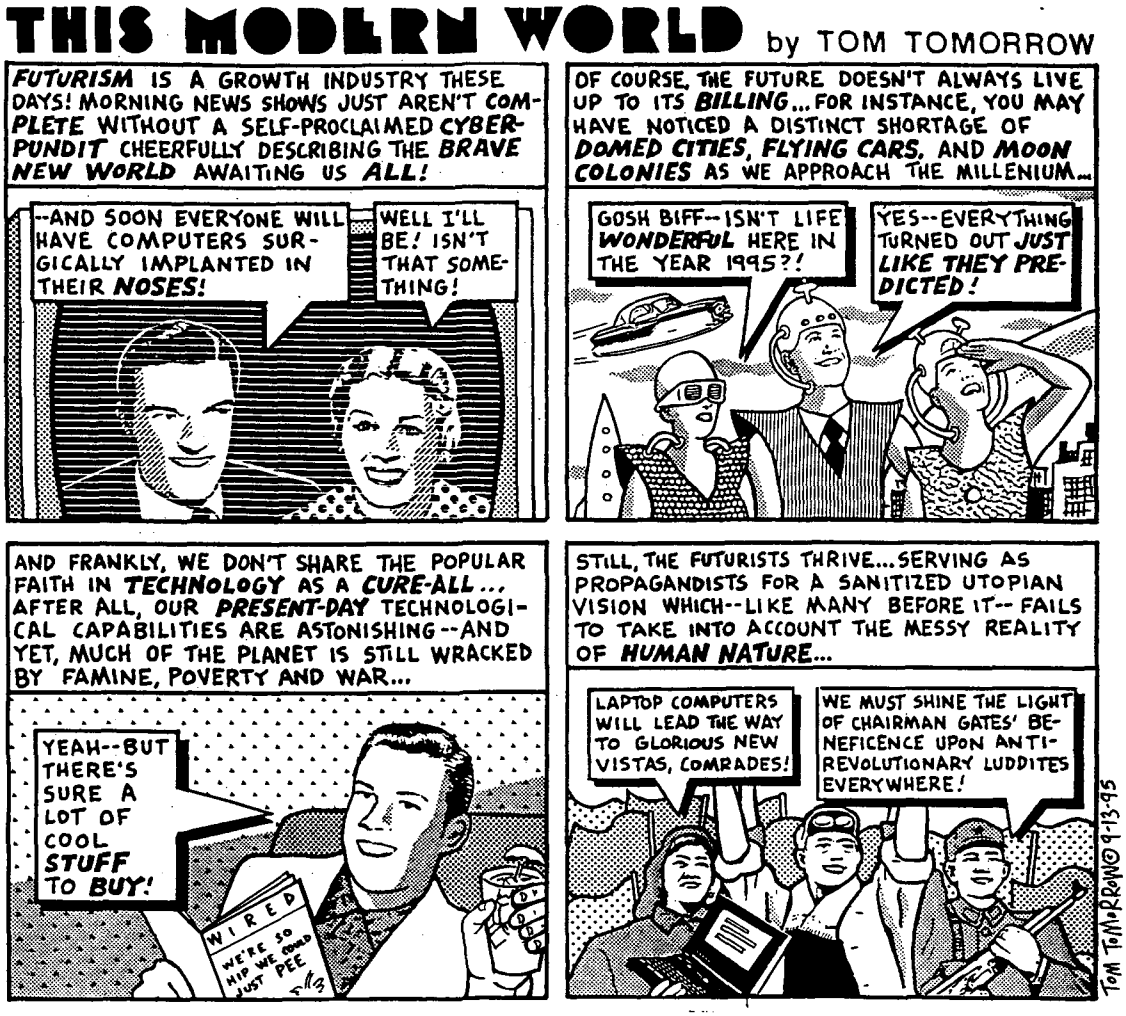
THIS MODERN WORLD by TOM TOMORROW
FUTURISM IS A GROWTH INDUSTRY THESE DAYS! MORNING NEWS SHOWS JUST AREN'T COMPLETE WITHOUT A SELF-PROCLAIMED CYBER-PUNDIT CHEERFULLY DESCRIBING THE BRAVE NEW WORLD AWAITING US ALL!
--AND SOON EVERYONE WILL HAVE COMPUTERS SURGICALLY IMPLANTED IN THEIR NOSES!
WELL I'LL BE! ISN'T THAT SOMETHING!
OF COURSE, THE FUTURE DOESN'T ALWAYS LIVE UP TO ITS BILLING... FOR INSTANCE, YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED A DISTINCT SHORTAGE OF DOMED CITIES, FLYING CARS, AND MOON COLONIES AS WE APPROACH THE MILLENIUM...
GOSH BIFF--ISN'T LIFE WONDERFUL HERE IN THE YEAR 1995?!
YES--EVERYTHING TURNED OUT JUST LIKE THEY PREDICTED!
AND FRANKLY, WE DON'T SHARE THE POPULAR FAITH IN TECHNOLOGY AS A CURE-ALL... AFTER ALL, OUR PRESENT-DAY TECHNOLOGICAL CAPABILITIES ARE ASTONISHING--AND YET, MUCH OF THE PLANET IS STILL WRACKED BY FAMINE, POVERTY AND WAR...
YEAH--BUT THERE'S SURE A LOT OF COOL STUFF TO BUY!
WIRED
WE'RE SO HIP WE COULD JUST PEE
STILL, THE FUTURISTS THRIVE... SERVING AS PROPAGANDISTS FOR A SANITIZED UTOPIAN VISION WHICH--LIKE MANY BEFORE IT-- FAILS TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE MESSY REALITY OF HUMAN NATURE...
LAPTOP COMPUTERS WILL LEAD THE WAY TO GLORIOUS NEW VISTAS, COMRADES!
WE MUST SHINE THE LIGHT OF CHAIRMAN GATES' BENEFICENCE UPON ANTI-REVOLUTIONARY LUDDITES EVERYWHERE!
TOM TOMORROW 9-13-95

manifesto by Ronnie Dugger that appeared in the *Nation*, calling for a Citizens Alliance that would revive the spirit and cause of the old populists. Dugger, who was founding editor of the *Texas Observer*, wrote:

> The big corporations and the centimillionaires and the billionaires have taken daily control of our work, our pay, our housing, our health, our pension funds, our bank and savings deposits, our public lands, our airwaves, our elections and our very government. It's as if American democracy has been bombed. . .
>
> I propose the emphasis on populism because the nineteenth century populists denied the legitimacy of corporate domination of a democracy, whereas in this century the progressives, the unions and the liberals gave up on and forgot about that organic and controlling issue. . . .

Dugger suggested a national meeting in November in St. Louis to kick off the populist alliance, although at press time it appeared that the meeting will be held sometime later. Meanwhile, others were investigating the possibility of some kind of shadow government, a collection of strong progressive voices that could be part of a presidential campaign or just stand on its own as the voice of a new movement.

There are, of course, enormous impediments to any third party presidential bid. Near the top of the list is the problem of ballot access -- not insurmountable but becoming more difficult as every deadline nears. Then there's the fact that many black progressives -- particularly in the Rainbow -- have been unwilling to burn their bridges with the Democrats. It seems that Jesse Jackson (who has a large campaign debt from his previous efforts) will, for the indefinite future, be content to play a game of chicken with the White House. The urban-based New Party also seems disinterested in a third party run.

There are other questions: What if a presidential bid is mounted but fairs poorly -- what effect will this have on progressive politics? Does a national race drain energy from local ones? What if the candidate runs, stirs up enthusiasm, but then loses interest in his or her new constituency as Jesse Jackson did in 1988, and Jerry Brown in 1992? What if we elect Dole? Who should run? Where's the money coming from? The organization?

On the other hand, there have not been many times when conditions have been as propitious for a third party candidacy as is true this year. There is clearly enthusiasm

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that could be mobilized. Even if the candidate didn't do that well, the campaign organization could easily become a national movement of transformational politics and culture. A campaign for president might also increase voter turnout. And as longtime Green John Rensenbrink has said, "If we are not in the race, who will give voice to the voiceless, who will tell the people? . . . Who will challenge and reconfigure the public debate so that real issues, real alternatives get on the table? If we're not there, who? If not now, when?"

An idea that seems to be catching hold among advocates of various strategies is that of a multi-party alliance modeled on the one enjoying considerable success in New Zealand. Five parties there have joined in a coalition in which each group has a veto power. In 1992, the Alliance won its first big victory, taking over the municipal authority in Auckland, New Zealand's largest city. It won 42% of the vote by combating privatization. Writing in *In These Times*, Penelope Whitney and Peter Camejo noted that "The National and Labor parties now view the Alliance as a serious threat." Polls show that a majority of New Zealanders favor some sort of coalition government in which the Alliance is a part. Such a move greatly upsets the country's corporatists. The *National Business Review* warned, for example:

> A grand coalition of the left . . . is not in the country's best interest. . . The restoration of trade-union power, the return to collective bargaining and the forcible extension of equal-employment opportunity and pay equity into the private sector are not the policies that will enhance economic grown or cut unemployment.

Should American parties come together in a similar alliance -- even if only around just a few central issues like fair elections and opposition to corporatism -- we could see a spark igniting a major revival of progressive politics -- at long last a response to the right-wing takeover of American democracy. -- *Sam Smith*

A few ideas for a new movement

Over the past year there have been several attempts to put forth a program of transformational politics that might have broad appeal. These have included our own Cooperative Commonwealth proposal (Apr 95 issue), the Common Ground statement coming out of the Third Parties '96 conference last June, the New Party platform and Ronnie Dugger's Citizen Alliance proposal. What follows is a synopsis of the ideas contained in these various proposals, alphabetical by subject. Those that showed up most frequently in all four platforms are indicated by shading.

COMMUNITIES

Community run schools
Community courts and justice centers
Community-controlled police
Neighborhood government

CORPORATIONS

Corporate charter term renewal
Labor/public representation on boards of major corporations
Removal of corporate protection under the 14th Amendment
Public interest requirements
Personal liability for corporate officers

DEMOCRACY

Proportional representation
Campaign finance reform
Improved ballot access
Elimination of corporate PACS and/or contributions
Public financing of elections
Initiative, referendum & recall
Voting on non-working days
Increasing the size of the House of Representatives
Worker, consumer, shareholder and taxpayer right of democratic self-organization
Universal voter registration
Campaign contribution limit
Creation of new states to make Senate more representative
Free broadcast times for candidates

DEVOLUTION

Devolution of power
End of use of federal greenmail to get around 10th Amendment
Return of national guard to state control

ECOLOGY

Sustainable economics, greening of economic development, zoning and planning and other public policy
Reduction, re-use and recycling
Development of eco-technologies
Creation of public oil company
Public takeover of some industries
New economic indicators
Eco-taxes
Bureau of Environmental Statistics

ECONOMICS

Major public investment program

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Universal 'social wage' including health care, child care, vacation time, and access to education
Guaranteed minimum income
End of policies favoring high unemployment
Economic and social assistance to those hurt by economic system
Economic decisions in the workplace to be made democratically -- by workers, community and consumers
Ending corporate welfare
Emphasis on needs of small business rather than those of major corporations
Full employment policy
Urban rebuilding
Emphasis on domestic rather than foreign trade

FINANCES

Interest-free loans to state and local governments for public works projects
Election of those in charge of federal banking system.
Worker-owner control over pension assets
Low-interest rate policy
Community-controlled alternative financial institutions
Abolition of the Federal Reserve system
Federal revenue sharing
A federal capital budget

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Trade should be conditioned on fair pay and rights of workers and on environmental protection
No trade with dictatorships

HEALTH

End of war on drugs; decriminalize narcotics
Single payer health insurance
Community-owned & controlled nursing home system
Classification of alcohol and cigarettes as dangerous drugs
State sale of drugs, alcohol & cigarettes
National addiction treatment system

HOUSING

Shared-equity housing funds from government
Encouragement of accessory apartments and boarding houses
Housing to be considered a fundamental human right

JUSTICE & RIGHTS

Juries to be informed of their right to judge both the law and the facts
Encouragement of mediation, arbitration and other forms of dispute resolution
Equality of opportunity for children including standards for health care, nutrition, housing and safety
Alternative sentencing for youths and non-violent offenders
Strong anti-discrimination action
Reproductive and sexual freedom
Support of affirmative action
Removal of barriers to equal opportunity

MEDIA

Limit on media ownership
Community owned and managed communications systems

MILITARY

Major cut in defense spending
Closing of foreign military bases
End to unilateral military interventions
Jobs program for laid-off defense workers
Peacekeeping agency
Criminalization of US arms exports
International agreement banning arms sales
Impeachment of any president who wages war without congressional approval
World citizenship available through UN, with fees going to support volunteer armed force.
Abolition of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons
Volunteer UN force to stop mass murders

TAXATION

Progressive income tax
Equitable funding of schools
Simplified progressive income tax
Within-state equalization of per-pupil spending
National equalization of per-pupil spending
Wealth tax
Surtax on corporate profits
Property tax expanded to cover all forms of property and not just real estate
Split-rate taxation

WORKERS

Shorter hours of work
Increase in minimum wage
Expansion of right to organize
Creation of an American Association of Workers modeled on the AARP.
Criminalization of big business opposition to union organizing.
Repeal of majority-vote requirement for forming bargaining units
Allowing minority unions
Preference in federal contracts to unions with practices in public interest

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They, too, thought they were free. . .

What happened was the gradual habituation of the people, little by little, to be governed by surprise, to receiving decisions deliberated in secret; to believe that the situation was so complicated that the government had to act on information which the people could not understand, or so dangerous that, even if people could understand it, it could not be released because of national security . . . The crises and reforms (real reforms too) so occupied the people that they did not see the slow motion underneath, of the whole process of government growing remoter and remoter . . .

To live in the process is absolutely not to notice it -- please try to believe me -- unless one has a much great degree of political awareness, acuity, than most of us ever had occasion to develop. Each step was so small, so inconsequential, so well explained or, on occasion, 'regretted'. . .

Believe me this is true. Each act, each occasion is worse than the last, but only a little worse. You wait for the next and the next. You wait for one shocking occasion, thinking that others, when such a shock comes will join you in resisting somehow . . .

Suddenly it all comes down, all at once . You see what you are, what you have done, or, more accurately, what you haven't done (for that was all that was required of most of us: that we did nothing). You remember those early meetings of your department in the university when, if one had stood, others would have stood, perhaps, but no one stood. A small matter, a matter of hiring this man or that, and you hired this one rather than that. You remember everything now, and your heart breaks. Too late. You are compromised beyond repair.

The words above are from a college professor quoted in a remarkable book about Nazism written by Milton Mayer in the 1950s. The book deserves a revival. *They Thought They Were Free* (University of Chicago Press) -- unlike so much written today on the subject -- examined not the horrific perversions but the horrible normalcy of the times. Mayer made friends with ten ordinary Nazis in the 1930s, including a tailor, a student, an unemployed bank clerk, a teacher and a policeman. He held back two facts from them: that he had independent sources of information about them and that he was a Jew. After the war he went back and talked to his friends some more.

How could he called them friends? He wrote, "I was overcome by the same sensation that had got in the way of my newspaper reporting in Chicago years before. I *liked* Al Capone. I like the way he treated his mother. He treated her better than I treated mine. "

An anti-Nazi woman, imprisoned for hiding Jews, told Mayer; "Let me tell you what that time [1938] was like in Germany. I was sitting in a cinema with a Jewish friend and her daughter of thirteen, while a Nazi parade went across the screen, and the girl caught her mother's arm and whispered, "Oh, Mother, Mother, if I weren't' a Jew, I think I'd be a Nazi."

Mayer summed up his experience this way:

Now I see a little better how Nazism overcame Germany -- not by attack from without or by subversions from within, but with a whoop and a holler. It was what most Germans wanted -- or, under pressure of combined reality and illusion, came to want. They wanted it; they got it; and they liked it.

I came back home a little afraid for my country, afraid of what it might want, and get, and like, under pressure of combined reality and illusions. I felt -- and feel -- that it was not German Man that I had met, but Man. He happened to be in Germany under certain conditions. He might be here, under certain conditions. He might, under certain conditions, be I."

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Feedback

Erstwhile DC sexual entrepreneur and activist (and sometime politician) Dennis Sobin writes from the Hamilton Correctional Institution in Jasper FL: I'm enjoying my retirement in Florida, in part thanks to you who helped put me here. How? Because the *DC Gazette* [the *Review's* predecessor] was the first to take me seriously. When 3,500 voters and 25,000 readers of *Free Spirit* finally did, that was apparently too much for the politicians and their functionary puppets to handle.

But that's OK. I'm really quite happy now that it has taken me three years to get used to the destruction of my family, my roots, my connections, my printing press. I'm feeling and thinking better than ever.

You're too kind; most of our readers haven't even been indicted yet. Nice to hear from you, anyway.

Attorney Robert Hager writes from Washington In the June issue, Richard Grossman argues that environmental lawyers who are all too willing to play by the rules made by corporate interests have diverted environmentalists from effectively challenging those same corporate interests in more fundamental ways.

I am a lawyer. I have handled a number of cases raising significant environmental issues: Three Mile Island, Bhopal disaster, Agent Orange are just a few. I've protested alongside anti-nuclear activists, and gotten them acquitted of trespass charges for civil disobedience. However I hesitate to identify myself as an environmental lawyer. Most environmental lawyers work for corporations mapping paths through loopholes in complex regulations. The rest work for the government, or such well-funded national environmental organizations, helping to micromanage the regulations which legitimize corporate interests in wasting the environment wherever profitable.

I have never thought that victories at the grass roots depended on the complex mating dance around regulatory issues that preoccupies most environmental lawyers. Instead, as the article argues, I have found over the past fifteen years that the legal victories that made a difference in the real world came out of what the article calls "bedrock law." The *Silkwood* case, which I helped carry to the Supreme Court, depended on traditional punitive damages law and conservative concepts of states' rights. Tort law led to the ban against asbestos. Criminal law was the arena for getting acquittals in civil disobedience at nuclear facilities. Local government law and states' rights enabled Parks Township, PA, to ban a nuclear waste incinerator. Agent Orange and Bhopal claims were destroyed by judicial manipulation of procedural rules that diverted these cases from reaching a jury. And so on.

The article's focus on blaming lawyers for the unsuccessful strategies of the national environmental organizations, however, is misdirected. Though it was not the intent, its attack on lawyers sounds strangely similar to the one from the right which has struck such a popular chord. The attack on lawyers has served as an all-purpose device for a Newtonian Congress to strip our most democratic institution, the jury, of important powers over corporate misconduct, and to liberate corporate criminals from the rule of law in other ways.

That the ethics of the legal professional have declined dramatically in the past few decades, as they have in all areas of community life, is hardly disputed. In litigation, this is due in good part to a similar decline in the quality of the judiciary, particularly at the federal level. But democracy cannot exist without the rule of law. The rule of law cannot exist without an independent enforcement mechanism. The most independent mechanism reposes broad responsibility for conducting the legal system in the hands of private lawyers and juries rather than in the state itself. Most complaints against lawyers are more properly aimed, if not at judges who tolerate the dominance of money over the law, then at the underlying interests lawyers represent. This is also true of environmental lawyers who represent large national environmental organizations.

This is the Washington game: the large environmental groups serve corporate interests,

1) by selling out grass roots interests whenever the grass roots efforts mount sufficient power to win fundamental change,

2) by selling the public and their supporters the marginal regulatory reforms received in return for their capitulations as if they were "victories" for the environment, and thereby creating the false public impression that someone is watching the store in Washington, and

3) by also obtaining, in exchange for these services, access to the corporate dominated agenda-making institutions, including Congress and the mass media. The legitimacy which access brings is then cashed in by these organizations in fundraising from foundations and the public, thereby diverting these resources away from activity that would serve the public interest.

A typical concession the national groups are asked to and do regularly make is federal preemption of state authority. This concession denies grass-roots groups the opportunity to turn to state and local governments, where they can usually exercise as much or more influence over environmental policy than the national groups do in Washington.

If such organizations did not exist, corporations would have to invent them. The responsibility for the failures of strategy, despite the money and energy expended over the past two decades, is better aimed at the role of large public interest groups, and not just at their lawyers.

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A few things we *do* know about Whitewater. . .

A new genre of journalism, counter-investigative reporting, has sprung up in recent years. Unlike an investigative journalist, who goes rooting around for mis, mal, and non-type feasance, the counter-investigative reporter is dedicated to proving that everything is all right and that other journalists who are unwilling to subject themselves to repeated ridiculed by their peers had best drop the case. The genre was inspired by the still murky assassinations of the 1960s, developed to something of an art by Steven Emerson during the Bush years, and now -- judging from the coverage of Whitewater -- has become the journalistic norm.

Astoundingly, even Robert Parry, himself a victim of counter-investigative journalism during Iran-Contra, has fallen into the practice, taking inconsequential shots at a few minor failings the *Wall Street Journal's* coverage of Whitewater in the recent issue of *Extra!* Parry uses one of the counter-investigative reporters' favorite techniques -- which is to point out a few dead trees and draw the conclusion that consequently there is no forest.

Even the special prosecutor's renewed interest in the Vincent Foster death fails to move the counter-investigators. When the FBI came back to Fort Marcy Park as part of a renewed investigation of the Foster death, the *Washington Times* put in it on the front page, but the *Washington Post* buried it in its gossip column. To such media, Whitewater is something trumped up by right-wing journals and that's that.

For those, however, who still prefer journalists to present facts rather than bury them, here are a few things we already know about Whitewater:

1. Bill and Hillary Clinton were partners in a resort land scheme of the sort local TV reporters win awards for exposing. More than half of the purchasers lost their land, many thanks to the sleazy form of financing provided.

2. Although the Clintons have consistently claimed to have been passive investors in Whitewater, numerous facts refute this claim.

3. An Oct. 12, 1981 letter from Hillary Clinton to partner James McDougal states, "If Reagonomics works at all, Whitewater could become the Western Hemisphere's Mecca." The nearest grocery store to this Mecca was fifty miles away.

4. Whitewater was bought from the 101 River Development company for twice the per-acre price that 101 had paid a few weeks earlier for a larger parcel of which Whitewater was a part.

5. The secretary of 101 was the president of the Citizens Bank of Flippin, Ark., which gave the Clintons and McDougals a $182,000 loan to buy Whitewater three months before Clinton was easily elected governor.

6. This loan, combined with a $20,000 loan from another bank, allowed the Clintons and the McDougals to get 100% financing for the land.

7. One year later, Governor Clinton named James McDougal a state economic development advisor.

8. In 1984, Clinton borrowed $50,000 from a bank run by Maurice Smith, one of Clinton's own aides.

9. One year later, Clinton named Maurice Smith director of the state highway department, which handled more patronage than any other state agency.

10. In 1980, Hillary Clinton got a $30,000 loan from James McDougal's own Bank of Kingston in order to build a pre-fab house on Whitewater land. In the two years since the original purchase (on 100% borrowed money), none of the debt had been paid back.

11. Whitewater failed to file corporate income tax returns for several years.

12. The following friends of Bill and Hillary have been indicted: both their real estate partners, Hillary's former law partner, their real estate agent, their SBA loan broker, their real estate appraiser, their banker, and Bill's successor as governor.

13. The following friend of Bill and Hillary is dead under mysterious circumstances: their personal lawyer, Vincent Foster.

14. The following friend of Bill and Hillary has been convicted on drug charges: Dan Lasater, the former head of the state development agency.

15. Mena, Arkansas, a Contra training and supply base, was used as a major drug importation facility during the 1980s. Hundred of millions of dollars in drug profits flowed through the town. Governor Bill Clinton was told about what was going on at Mena and did nothing to investigate.

16. Clinton's gubernatorial security chief, Buddy Young, was described by a judge in a 1990 court case as having a "reckless disregard for the truth." The case involved charges made by Young against Mena drug scandal whistle-blower Terry Reed. The judge declared that "no jury could find by reasonable doubt that the defendant was guilty. There are too many holes in the chain of proof."

17. Buddy Young was subsequently named by Bill Clinton to a $92,000 a year job in the Federal Emergency Management Administration.

18. Prominent friends and backers of Clinton have been under extensive investigation by the DEA or the FBI, according to investigative reporters Sally Denton and Roger Morris. Said one law enforcement official, "This may be the first president in history with such close buddies" targeted for protracted drug investigations.

19.On September 26, 1993, Luther 'Jerry' Parks was ambushed and shot in a mob-style killing. Parks had been investigating Clinton's infidelities for about six years and had accumulated a substantial file. Shortly

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before his murder, his home was broken into and the Clinton files stolen.

20. Bill and Hillary Clinton have misrepresented their role in Whitewater and related financial matters.

21.Bill Clinton misrepresented his relationship with Genifer Flowers.

22.Hillary Clinton misrepresented her relationship with Madison Guaranty S&L.

23. The White House has misrepresented and withheld facts concerning the death of Foster and the White House travel scandal.

24. The White House obstructed the FBI and Park Police investigation into the death of Foster.

25. The White House obstructed a Justice Department investigation into the travel office scandal by concealing the existence of Vincent Foster's notebook on the subject.

26. Hillary Clinton made a substantial sum in the futures market in a manner inexplicable by either skill (she was a neophyte) or chance.

27. Hillary Clinton made a $44,000 profit on a $2000 investment in a cellular phone franchise deal that involved taking advantage of the FCC's preference for locals, minorities and women, and then almost immediately flipping the franchise to the cellular giant, McCaw.

28. Hillary Clinton's law firm, working on contract for the Resolution Trust Corporation, got the RTC to settle a lawsuit involving the $65 million collapse of Madison Guaranty for only one million. This was later reduced by canceling a $600,000 debt from Seth Ward, Webster Hubbell's father-in-law. Much of the remaining funds went to Rose for counsel fees.

29. Whitewater special prosecutor Kenneth Starr has filed 21 charges, including 14 felonies, against 12 Arkansas residents.

30. The special prosecutor has several score FBI agents still working on the case and has extended the term of the grand jury investigating aspects of the matter for another six months.

In sum, there appears to be something here.

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